Our Boys and Girls

SERVING.

"I wish that I were big and strong and grown up, like Brother Tom," said Ned. "I'd like to work in town, and come home every Saturday night, as Tom does, instead of doing chores and running errands."

Ned tossed his armful of wood into the box with an impatient sigh.

His mother smiled. "Come," she said. "I have a story to tell you."

"Once upon a time," she began, "there was a brave little worker bee, who lived in a big hive. She was strong and willing, and was ready to do anything. And what do you think was the only thing required of her? She and a dozen other bees were placed at the door of the hive, and were told to keep their wings in motion, so as to send a steady current of air into the inner cells of the hive where the queen was. The little worker bee was disappointed, for she had wished to do some great service for her queen.

"She could see other workers hurrying about and doing such important tasks! Some were making wax, and building the comb inside the hive; others were providing food for the young bees, and still others were feeding honey to the queen herself!

"Day by day the little worker grew more discontented, until one day the queen sent a message to the tireless workers at the doorway. 'Tell them,' she said, 'that they are doing me a wonderful service. Without the air they are sending me I could never live.'

"When the little worker heard this message she took courage and her wings whirred as they never whirred before. She felt at last that she, too, was serving the queen."

"That was a parable story, wasn't it, mother?" said Ned, as he squared his shoulders. "Well, you're the nicest queen I know, and I'm going to be your best worker."—Selected.

A NEW YEAR'S DAY.

"Come, Lester, we are going to have just the grandest time New Year's," said Halford to his friend. "Papa has engaged a big barge and four horses and we're going to Old Fort Inn—all the uncles, cousins and aunts—and take dinner and come home by moonlight. Oh, we'll have a jolly time! What are you going to do, Lester?"

"Oh, we shall stay at home, I s'pose," Lester answered.

"But you'll have company and have a big dinner, won't you?" asked Halford.

"No," said Lester. "You see, papa was sick all the fall, and then mother had to go to New York to have her eyes 'tended to, so there isn't any money for good times. But I'm glad mamma's eyes are better. I guess I don't mind very much about Christmas and New Year's."

"Course you do—you can't help it," said Halford. "It's a shame! But I'll have to go home now. Good-bye!" And Halford started homeward.

But he was so unhappy about it he could hardly eat his dinner.

"Lost your appetite, Halford?" asked his father.

"I'm thinking all the time about Lester," said Halford. "They can't have any good time New Year's 'cause they haven't any money, and I think it's a shame, and he a minister! Why can't you invite them all to go with us, papa, to Old Fort Inn.'

"I would do it with pleasure if there were room," said Halford's father. "And when I think of it, Aunt Lois has decided not to go, and I'll ride on the seat with the driver, so if you'll give up your seat to your friend Lester, I'll send an invitation at once."

"And I stay at home! Why, Papa Newell! You know I couldn't do that!" cried Halford. "You know the boys are expecting me to play hockey with them."

"I don't ask you to do it," said his father. "But you seemed so anxious to have Lester go I was trying to think how we could manage to carry them. But as they know nothing about it, they won't be disappointed. So think no more about it."

But Halford found that not so easy. He could not help thinking how many things and how many pleasures he had that Lester did not have. There was his bicycle, his box of tools, his new sled, his skates and ever so many books, and he was sure—now he came to think about it—that Lester was as fond of all those things as he was. But he was sure he could not give up this ride even for his best friend. That was too much. But in the evening he said to his papa:

"I couldn't stay at home alone, and besides, I don't b'lieve Mr. Lowell would feel able to pay for their dinner and everything." There was an uncertain and troubled look in his face.

His father looked up from his paper; then he laughed.

"Oh, you are still thinking about the ride, are you?" he said. "Well, as to that, of course, if I invited them to go I should pay all the bills. That would be my part, and you know Grandma Hawes would be delighted to have you spend the day with her."

Halford sighed and said no more, but that night he could not sleep. The next morning he went to his mother.

"Mamma, won't you or papa write that invitation for Mr. Lowell and all of them, right off," h esaid, "and tell them they must be sure to go? And I guess I'll go to grandma's today 'cause she always likes to have me stay two or three days." And before his mother could answer he was off.

The next morning he was cracking nuts when he heard a great noise of sleigh bells, horns and shouting. He ran to the door, followed by grandma, Susan, the cook, and Rover. There were his papa and mamma, the Lowells and all the others, and everybody looked happy.

"Hurry and get on your coat," said papa, "and you and Lester can sit up here beside me. We thought there wouldn't be much fun in going without you, after all, for the boys needed you for the hockey game."

Halford with joy climbed up beside his father, and the four horses dashed over the smooth road toward Old Fort Inn.—Ex.

MOLLY AND THE BOB WHITES.

"Do little birds do just as their fathers and mothers do?" questioned Molly, as she leaned close to Aunt Elinor, and looked across the field to where "Bob White" and his family had established a summer home.

"Not always," replied Aunt Elinor, slipping her arm about the little girl. "Sometimes they learn by their own experience to have more confidence in men and women and children than their parents had."

"What is confidence?" questioned Molly, who always wanted to know the meaning of things.

"Well, it's just the feeling you have when you lean up against me," explained Aunt Elinor, with a little laugh. "You are sure I won't hurt you, and you feel safe, as though you were protected."

"Oh, yes," responded Molly. "And do some birds feel that way when they are near people?"

Aunt Elinor nodded. "In countries where children are taught to be gentle and friendly with birds they become very tame."

"Would those little Bob-Whites ever have confidence in me?" asked Molly.

"Yes, indeed," said Aunt Elinor. And that very day Molly went across the field to where Mrs. Bob-White was perched on the low fence, talking to her little family.

Molly did not go very near. She sat down on a big stone, where she could see them plainly; but Mrs. Bob-White fluttered off the fence and joined her family, and they all scuttled away in the tall grass. Molly sat very quietly, and scattered the little bag of wheat she had brought all about the rock. After a while, as the birds did not come back, she went home.

The next day she started down the field again, for Aunt Elinor had told her that she must be very patient with all small wild creatures, and that it would take many visits before the quails would know that she was a friend. As she came near the rock where she had sat the day before, there was a flutter of wings, and Mother Quail flew off to her perch on the fence, and Molly heard a low, plaintive "Quoi-i-hee!" from the little birds; but they did not follow their mother very far. Molly sat down in the grass, and saw the little birds pick up the sweet grains of wheat; and Mother Quail, after a few scolding notes, came back to her family. But she hopped about nervously or made little upward flights.

Molly was sure that the birds were beginning to know her. This time she left some pieces of cake near the rock; and every day for two weeks she came faithfully to visit the Bob-Whites. By this time they began to look for her, and these wildest of wild birds had learned what their parents had not known—confidence in human beings. Aunt Elinor would sit on the porch and watch Molly go across the field, and see the little Bob-Whites come almost within reach of her little niece's hand. Sometimes they would even follow Molly a little way toward the house in the most loving and fearless manner, although their doubtful mother called warningly after her family, as though she had not conquered all her fears, or as though she would teach them not to be too ready to trust.

"They have learned something their mother doesn't know, haven't they, Aunt Elinor?" Molly declared, happily, as she looked back toward the birds, and remembered what Aunt Elinor had told her of the meaning of the word "confidence."—Selected.

600 MILES ON FOOT.

A missionary, in writing to his board, remarks that since his last letter he has traveled in doing the work on his field 965 miles, 600 of which were on foot. The immense amount of strain involved in such campaigning is too little appreciated at home.—Men and Missions.